

Leadership and Environmental Conservation in the South Pacific

Week 1: Arrival and Program Orientation in Christchurch, New Zealand

After making the trans Pacific journey, the group will have a day to settle in to the city of Christchurch, a community that experienced a devastating earthquake in 2011. With tremendous effort on the local and national level, Christchurch has grown into a lively and vibrant city, enjoying a resurgence of art, music, and theater. The group will explore this city while engaging in 3-4 days of orientation, team building activities, establishing a group culture, and setting the foundation for the upcoming journey.

Week 2-3: Outdoor Adventure and Education with Whenua Iti

From Christchurch, we travel to Nelson; a wonderland of lush forests, rugged mountains, and ocean beaches. Here your group will hike the Abel Tasman trail, one of New Zealand's "Seven Great Walks". Along the way, our local partners offer workshops in Maori culture, myth, and legend; knowledge of local flora and fauna; and introductions to Rakau (traditional fighting sticks), Rongoa (traditional Maori medicine), and haka (a traditional Maori dance of both war and peace). Additional activities may include rappelling, caving, sea kayaking, ropes courses, and open water paddling in a traditional waka (Maori Canoe).

Week 4: Organic Farm Stay

Crossing the Cook Strait by boat, we transfer to the North island, and explore the capital of New Zealand: Wellington. Discover the Te Papa museum (a world class museum dedicated to Maori history and culture) and enjoy a brief urban interlude. Next, your group will travel to the Hart Family Farm, a site of progressive regenerative farming practices. The group will learn about food systems, the importance of organic farming practices, and the latest practices in sustainable/regenerative agriculture. We'll gain firsthand experience by shearing sheep, harvesting vegetables, milking cows, and planting trees. We'll learn to make yoghurt and bake homemade bread. And all the while, we'll enjoy fresh organic food that is either directly from the farm, or grown locally.

Week 5: Maori Culture and Indigenous Perspectives

In the Raglan region of Aotearoa (the Maori name for New Zealand), there is a progressive movement toward environmental activism, closely linked with the Maori emphasis on stewardship of the land. The group will stay on a traditional marae (common space). We'll dive into 8 days of exploring traditional Maori performing arts (Waiata and Kapahaka) and language, as well as participating in local initiatives that have garnered national attention for local efforts in recycling and trash reclamation. The group will end the experience with a traditional sweat lodge ceremony (led by an Indigenous person from the U.S.), reflecting on a week of cultural exploration, and sharing our gratitude with our hosts.

Week 6: Student Directed Travel

Having established a cohesive group culture, and experiencing many facets of New Zealand culture, students will collectively shape a week of group travel. While your Overseas Educators will be there to assist and guide, the group will handle budget, logistics, and determine activities for the upcoming week. New Zealand has endless opportunities for exploration!

Week 7-9: Fijian Culture, Home stays, and Scuba

Flying from Auckland to Nadi, the group will have a few days to adapt to Fijian culture and climate. Society here still revolves around the village, and the importance of family and community are a central aspect of Fijian culture. We'll explore these themes by staying in a rural village on the island of Vanua Levu. The group will be welcomed by an assembly of villagers, the chief among them. After a welcome ceremony, students will be introduced to their host families. We will spend 8 days in a home stay setting, participating in the daily lives of our host families, helping with agricultural tasks, and learning about the Fijian way of life. There will also be a service project during the day; the type of project will depend on the current needs of the community. This is a unique opportunity to gain insight into traditional village life of the Melanesia.

After our home stay, the group will engage in a PADI open water diver course. Based in the town of Savusavu, we work with a Fijian owned and operated dive shop. After getting comfortable with scuba theory, equipment, and basic pool skills, the group will head out to the ocean and begin exploring the majestic, colorful reefs just off the coast of Savusavu.

Week 10: Permaculture and Environmental Restoration

As the group says farewell to Fiji, we move to the Australian continent and explore a unique eco reserve and rehabilitation project. Owners Claire and Marcus, two PhD level scientists, have lovingly revitalized this 165 acre site. With ample help from volunteers, they have succeeded in

efforts of large scale reforestation, restoration of wetlands, increasing pollinator populations, and starting a wallaby rehabilitation project. Claire and Marcus are amazing hosts, and will provide a mix of educational activities, work projects, guided nature walks (sunrise and sunset are the best), and plenty of inspiration as to how we can each participate in environmental stewardship. We'll spend 10 days here, camping in comfortable canvas tents, exploring local swimming holes, cooking communal meals, and learning from our hosts. We'll also spend 2 days working on a nearby local marine conservation project, helping to gather data for scientists in their efforts to keep Australia's marine life healthy and abundant.

Week 11: Reflection and Mindfulness

At this point in the journey, our hearts and minds are full with experience, gratitude, and endless possibilities. An important aspect of such intensive learning is the act of reflecting on one's experiences. To this end, the group will travel to a Buddhist retreat center in the hinterland of Australia's Sunshine Coast. Set in the lush subtropical forest, the center will provide secular teaching of Buddhism specific to mindfulness, integration of experience, and reflection. The group will practice seva (selfless service) during the day, attend morning and evening meditations, and have ample opportunities to find a quiet spot and reflect on all that we have learned.

Week 12: Reintegration and the Blue Mountains

Leaving the Sunshine Coast, journey inland to the majestic Blue Mountains, and iconic landscape just a 3 hour train ride from Sydney. Once here, the group will settle into our accommodation and begin activities designed to synthesize our experiences and newfound understanding. With the Blue Mountain National Park as backdrop, the group will explore ways of preparing for the upcoming reintegration to life at home, and strategies in keeping our sense of adventure and inquiry engaged in the context of our daily lives. Finally, the group will spend a day in Sydney, enjoying one of the most beautiful cities on the planet, and celebrating our shared journey.

****Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***